



## TUMMY TROUBLES?

### *How to Tackle Common Stomach Woes*

Most people don't like to publicly talk about certain tummy troubles. Indeed, admitting that you have diarrhea or bad gas in front of co-workers or friends would probably be a little (or a lot) embarrassing. Fortunately, a good amount of stomach problems are temporary and harmless.

Here's what you need to know and what you can do if you're struck with one of these common (but often not talked about) tummy conditions.

#### TUMMY TROUBLE: **DIARRHEA**

Diarrhea happens to everyone. In fact, most adults will experience it several times a year. The condition occurs when there's an infection in the intestinal tract, which can be caused by a variety of bacterial, viral or parasitic organisms. Infection is spread through contaminated food or drinking-water, or from person-to-person as a result of poor hygiene. Diarrhea can also be caused by medications or even stress can cause diarrhea.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

In most cases, diarrhea will subside in a few hours or a day. If you're suffering from the condition:

*Hydrate.* When you have diarrhea you can quickly lose fluids. Take frequent, small sips of water until your bout subsides. You also lose essential salts in your body when you have this condition, so having a few salty snacks like pretzels or crackers can help replace lost sodium.

*Avoid spicy foods.* They can further irritate an upset stomach. You'll also want to avoid highly acidic foods like citrus fruits as well as alcohol and caffeine until all your symptoms have disappeared.

*Consider an over-the-counter anti-diarrheal medicine* if you have a severe case or if you have to be in a public place or are travelling.

Keep in mind that you can help prevent diarrhea by washing your hands frequently.

### TUMMY TROUBLE: **GASSINESS**

Practically no one likes to admit they've passed gas, but the truth of the matter is that most of us pass gas anywhere from 13 to 21 times a day! Gas can be caused by swallowing too much air and/or bacteria in the gut that helps digest food. Gas can cause discomfort and cramping, and can ultimately be a source of embarrassment if you "let one slip" in public.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

*Try drinking through a straw.* It can help ensure you swallow less air. Avoiding chewing gum and hard candy can also help you from swallowing excess air that causes gassiness.

*Identify your triggers.* Many high fiber foods can cause gas. Of course, you don't want to cut down on healthy fruits, vegetables and beans and legumes. Instead, try to keep track of what causes you to feel bloated and gassy. Maybe it's a combination of foods that causes gas or the amount you're eating. Tracking how your body responds is a great first step. If you know eating broccoli causes gas for you, maybe you can hold off until dinner as opposed to having it at lunch when you're around co-workers.

### TUMMY TROUBLE: **BLOATING**

Aside from making your middle appear larger, bloating can be downright uncomfortable. Bloating often arises from overeating, eating too fast and/or constipation.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

*Eat smaller portions.* Overeating is probably the most common cause of bloating. Smaller portions should help eliminate bloating and discomfort.

*Reduce or eliminate fried and greasy foods.* Fried, fatty foods can make you feel uncomfortably stuffed. Additionally, many greasy foods, including fried chips and meats also are high in sodium. Sodium-rich foods can cause or worsen bloating associated with water retention.

*Take your time when eating.* Eating too fast can cause you to overeat and thus feel bloated and uncomfortable after a meal. It can take up to 20 minutes for your brain to tell your stomach it's full. Take your time with each bite and eat at a table and not at your desk or in front of the TV where you'll be distracted and not fully focused on eating.

